

# Newsletter

## Technology Lessons 4 Teachers

### 6 Great Photo Editing Tools: Part 2 BeFunky, Pixlr, & Ribbet!

**BeFunky** – [befunky.com](http://befunky.com) – We've featured BeFunky before as an iPod app, but they were first a photo-editing website. Upload your photos & play with extensive amount of edits, effects, text, & frames. There is also a box of goodies to try & get a little artsy by turning your photos into works of art. One of my new favorite photo tools to use.

**Pixlr** – [pixlr.com](http://pixlr.com) – Offers a great set of image creation & editing tools. Besides their web-based service, they also have apps for Androids phones & iPhones (*Pixlr-o-Matic* & *Pixlr Express*). *Pixlr Editor* is their more advanced image creation & editing tool. You can create drawings from scratch, & have options for uploading images or importing images from other places on the web. There is a large selection of creation & editing tools. There

are also options for making multiple layer images, dozens of filter settings, & of course tools for cropping and resizing images. *Pixlr Express* is their middle option. It allows you simple editing options, presets & a chance to be more creative. *Pixlr-o-matic* is for a simple quick touch-up or resizing of an image.

**Ribbet!** – [www.ribbet.com](http://www.ribbet.com) – Picnik was once a very popular photo-editing tool, until they closed down last year. Ribbet! is built on the same platform & feels very familiar. Crop, resize, & add effects to your photos. Easy to use with just a few clicks transform your photos. If you sign up for an account, Ribbet! will store your editing history, so you can open up a photo you edited months ago & re-edit it into something new.



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# Treefrog Treasure

<http://bit.ly/XVRIEw>

Treefrog Treasure is a platformer game that allows players to explore different worlds as a frog and learn fractions and numberline concepts. When certain obstacles are reached, a player must properly identify a target symbol, whole number, or fraction on a numberline to collect gems and complete the level. Hints are provided to help the player reach the correct answer when mistakes are made.



## ActivExpressions

Laura Phillips, HS Literature

Do you occasionally find yourself with a few minutes left over at the end of the period? And it's that class where you can't just say, "read quietly," because it's full of kids who were squirrels in a previous life?

I have a solution for you.

Have the kids grab an ActivExpression. Open up ActivInspire to a blank page. On the toolbar, there is a circle icon with a question mark on it. This is the express poll. You can use this without having any questions written up in advance, and it allows you to do multiple choice, true/false, sort in order, as well as text and numeric answers.

When you click on it, another similar icon will appear on the screen. Hover the mouse over it, and your options will appear. When you choose the option you want, the voting period will start. When all the kids have sent in their answers, stop the polling. Now this is where it gets fun, at least for me. If you want to keep track of correct answers, there is an option for you type it in. On the top of the "Vote Results" screen, there is an icon that looks like a multiple choice test, with an A and B answer, with the B checked. Click on that, and you can enter in the correct answer, and ActivExpression will keep track of how many each student answered correctly.

I use this at least once a day. It's a good way to review and it keeps the kids from swinging from the light fixtures...



## Guest Post: Zac Konrad, HS Music

I want to tell you all about a project on which I've been working the past year. I was presented with a dilemma many years ago. I taught in the relatively small town of Auburn, NE just south of Plattsmouth &, for a couple years, was the only full-time instrumental music instructor in the entire town. Being fresh out of college, I felt like I knew nothing at times. I did not have a lot of connections beyond college friends in the exact same situation as me & college directors already swamped with questions/duties. Through trial-&-error & a local previous director's help, I eventually figured out some issues, but I saw a need in our profession for better connections, especially for my generation. I decided to develop a project called the "Band Directors of Nebraska Podcast" or BDNP.

The BDNP will be a video series involving many directors from Nebraska in an attempt to better reach out to & connect with their colleagues from around the state. The idea is that videos will be released on a weekly schedule which will include content from a variety of areas such as: instrument technique, organization tips, rehearsal suggestions, repertoire discussions, conducting mastery, historical interviews, & hopefully many other subjects. The most important factor to me is that this is a podcast FOR directors created BY directors. I truly believe that we all have something to offer whether it be "how to best use the third valve slide on a trumpet" or a simple library organization tool. The goal is not to provide end-all answers, but to add to an ever-growing development as an educator.

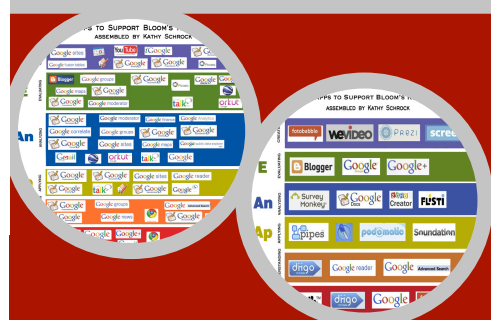
I've been able to assemble a team comprised of directors from various levels of band instruction both in & outside of the metro area & are working out logistical issues so that this can be launched as soon as possible. We are still working out where exactly this will be posted/offered & also whether or not this will be an exclusive offer for members of our NSBA organization or open to the entire public.

Those details should be finalized by the end of March & we are on track to have this go live as soon as the end of the school year. It's an exciting project and I'm looking forward to seeing how it develops.



## Bloomin' Apps

<http://bit.ly/VAYtxU>



This page gathers iPad, Google, Android, & Web 2.0 Apps in one place! They support each of the levels of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy. Each image has clickable hotspots that will take you to a suggested app!



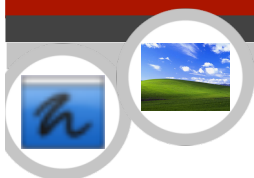
## Websites 2 Check Out

### Perfect Pitch & Hello Sign



Music – **Perfect Pitch** – [bit.ly/UwRENd](http://bit.ly/UwRENd) – This is a great music game featured around the orchestra with a baseball theme. Perfect Pitch teaches students about the instruments in four different eras of music – baroque, classical, romantic, & modern. There are three sections of the game. First students can *Meet the Players*, where they can learn facts & hear samples of the different instruments. *Create a Lineup*, where they can compose their own music based on the era. Then finally, *Play Ball!* which is more like an interactive quiz. A great site worth visiting.

Various Web Tools – **Hello Sign** – [www.hellosign.com](http://www.hellosign.com) – Hello Sign is a free service that allows you to digitally sign documents. The site will record your signature using a mouse or by importing a picture of your autograph. You can also upload a PDF & email it to students or parents for them to view & sign. No printing is needed. There is also has an app for iOS devices.



## ActivInspire

### Desktop Annotate & Set Background

**Desktop Annotate** allows you to have a clear overlay, like an overhead transparency on top of other programs. You will have use of the pen tool, highlighter, eraser, & voting tools while interacting with your desktop. To go back to ActivInspire, click the Desktop Annotate buttons again, not the Inspire icon on the dock of your computer. Notice that once you go back to Inspire you now have a new flipchart, "Desktop Flipchart." If you save this, you will only be saving an invisible flipchart with annotates, not the desktop. Use the Set Background option to create a background for you to save.

**Set Background** allows you to set any image as a background on your flipchart page. Let's say you want to create your own background based on an image outside (like a website) of the Resource Library. First, you may want to ensure that the background you want is the appropriate size. Typically a flipchart background should be 1024 x 768, but you can use other sizes & stretch them.

1. Open a blank page, right click & select **Set Background**
2. Choose **Image** & click **Browse** to find the image for your background
3. Select image & click **Open**
4. Select what type of fit you want, & select **Apply** to see a preview. If you like it, then click on **Okay**. The image should now be your background.

# ALL Learners: Smart Apps for Kids & DialSafe Pro

Early Childhood Learners – Smart Apps for Kids –

[www.smartappsforkids.com](http://www.smartappsforkids.com) – Each day the website posts apps that have gone free in the area of education. Most of the apps seem to be geared toward Pre-K & Elementary school but there are links at the bottom of the home page for Top apps for older kids. This is an awesome website for teachers & parents alike! You can enter your email to have each day's free apps delivered to your inbox.

SPED Learners – DialSafe Pro – Aimed toward students with Autism

Spectrum Disorder, but certainly can be used with students with other needs. This app assists parents with something important, their child's safety. DialSafe Pro helps children learn how to use a phone & dial important numbers, like 911 & other

numbers added by parents. The parent can also add 3 audio answers, so when the child dials the number correctly, they hear who they called answer the phone!



## iPod Apps

### Puppet Pals, Weather Channel, & The Grading Game



Elementary – **Puppet Pals Pocket** – Create your own unique shows with animation & audio in real time! Simply pick out your actors & backdrops, drag them on to the stage, & tap record. Your movements & audio will be recorded in real time for playback later. This app is as fun as your own creativity. (Also available as Puppet Pals HD for the iPad.)



Middle School – **The Weather Channel** – The Weather Channel app is a free app that is being used by middle school science teachers to track the weather either locally or in places around the world. Some classes have been tracking the weather in their cities for up to a month at a time. This app is nice for an individual check of the weather as well. It gives weather by the hour, the day, the week or the month.



High School – **The Grading Game** – Find typos & grammar errors in The Grading Game. This app can improve your students' capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar, & more in a unique challenging way. Students grade papers for errors before the clock runs out of time.

